

# Panama Profile

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Panama is located 15 miles southeast of Lincoln on the north side of Panama Road and just ½ mile west of Highway 43. An abandon railroad right of way bisects the town on a diagonal and creates an interesting intersection in the center of town. This right of way has been repurposed as a public trail. Panama is surrounded by farmland with very little acreage development in the area.

Panama's strengths include an active and progressive Village Board which has accomplished much in the past several years. Panama boasts an affordable lifestyle that is safe, family oriented, friendly and just a few minutes from Lincoln. The town has well maintained private and public properties. There has been a strong effort in the last several years to develop public amenities including parks, trails and a community center soon to be constructed. Panama has some unique architecture with two story homes with distinctive tall narrow windows. For a town of its size, Panama has grand plans for recreational facilities such as a BMX bicycle facility, soccer field, and trail. The community center has recently been funded and will be built in spring of 2015 in the center of town. Plans are being made to locate a playground to the new community center site. Panama holds an annual 4<sup>th</sup> of July event complete with professional fireworks.

Panama has no trouble finding volunteers for specific events and projects, but does struggle to keep boards and committees full. They typically have good luck tapping into the passion of individuals and bringing them in on projects that address those passions. Generally, the people of Panama will respond to a call for assistance.

Panama has a meat locker that is very active and serves customers from all over the area. There is a new café and bakery being planned in a unique building in the village center. The church, which sponsors a monthly food pantry service hosted by the meat locker, has recently made major renovations and additions to the building. The large lumberyard building, also in the center of town, has been in various uses over the last decade and currently is being partially used. The former public school building is being renovated into private dwelling and offices for the attorney who owns it as well as rental housing.

Lincoln can pose some challenges for Panama in that it pulls businesses away from the village – for example the once successful lumber yard. Panama does have some development potential since its utilities are in good shape but planning that development to optimize services is a problem. The utilities require constant, vigilant maintenance.

## GOALS:

1. New Community Center– The community center will be constructed during the 2015 season and will be a major accomplishment for the village. It will be important to develop programming for the community center that will make the best possible use of it for the village. The board would like information on possible programing for this building.
2. Parks and Recreation Plan- Recreation is very important to the people of Panama and there have been several ideas developed for new facilities. Panama also has the beginning of a trail system that they would like to further develop. A coordinated Parks and Recreation Plan would help focus resource and coordinate with other nearby municipalities that may also have regional trails ambitions.
3. The entry to Panama is not very clearly marked and is easy to miss from Panama Road. A clear entry point that has "personality" and welcomes visitors with directional information would help create a front door to the community.